



File Code: 1950; 2720
Date: July 11, 2018

Dear Interested Party:

The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland is preparing an environmental assessment to consider and disclose the anticipated environmental effects of implementing a project proposed by Loveland Ski Area. The proposed Loveland Ski Area project aims to provide guided snowcat tours that would offer backcountry ski/snowboard access for their users. The proposed project is consistent with Loveland's 2017 Master Development Plan and is located in the upper reaches of the Dry Gulch area, which is in and adjacent to the Loveland Ski Area. The Loveland Ski Area is 53 miles west of Denver and located in the southern portion of the Arapaho National Forest, Clear Creek County, Colorado.

The purpose of this project is to satisfy the growing demand for expert backcountry terrain access. Ski area guest expectations and desires have grown to include access to expert backcountry terrain. The project would help meet current and future demand at Loveland Ski Area and keep it competitive within the ski industry. It would also provide additional recreational opportunities on National Forest System land by providing high quality backcountry customer service to users of this area. Providing commercially guided ski/snowboard access helps ensure a quality experience for those who are either unfamiliar with the National Forest System lands or lack the skill or equipment to experience the setting unguided. The proposed action would require an outfitter-guide special use permit on approximately 210 acres outside of Loveland Ski Area's current permit boundary.

The operation would consist of establishing three temporary (over-snow) snowcat routes to allow the snowcat to access drop-off and pick-up points for customers skiing on guided tours. There would be approximately 5-7 runs per trip, with total runs of 160-224 per day. The project area consists of approximately 580 acres and the total length of snowcat routes within the project area would be approximately 2.5 miles, with 1.8 miles within the Loveland Ski Area Special Use Permit boundary and 0.7 miles outside of the boundary. Total snow compaction from the snowcat routes would be approximately three acres, with additional compaction from ski and snowboard use. Avalanche mitigation would be achieved by hand tossed charges below the mountain ridgeline.

The Responsible Official for this project is the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland Forest Supervisor, Monte Williams.

Additional information can be obtained by calling Deb Ekstrand at 303-257-3024 or at the Forest website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=54196>.



COMMENTS

A critical part of our analysis is identifying and understanding your concerns, and involving you in the development of this project. The proposed project is an activity implementing a land management plan and subject to the objection process described in 36 CFR 218 Subparts A and B. The Forest Service is combining scoping with the legal notice and opportunity to comment, consistent with §218.24. The public is encouraged to provide specific written comments (§218.2) on this proposal, including supporting reasons for the responsible official to consider. Specific written comments should be within the scope of and have a direct relationship to the proposed action.

Written comments will be accepted for 30 calendar days following the publication of a legal notice in *The Coloradoan*. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. The regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period.

Only those who submit timely and specific written comments will have eligibility to file an objection under §218.8. Issues raised in objections must be based on previously submitted timely, specific written comments regarding the proposed project unless based on new information arising after the designated comment opportunity. Individuals and organizations wishing to be eligible to object must meet the information requirements in §218.25(a)(3), including that each individual or representative from each entity submitting written comments must provide the name and postal address of the individual or entity submitting the comment, and either sign the comment or verify identity upon request. Names, contact information, and the comments will become part of the public record and may be released under the Freedom of Information Act.

Written, facsimile, or electronic comments concerning this project will be accepted. Written comments should be submitted to Loveland Dry Gulch Project at Clear Creek Ranger District, PO Box 3307, Idaho Springs, CO 80452. Comments may also be sent via e-mail to comments-rocky-mountain-arapaho-roosevelt-clear-creek@fs.fed.us or via facsimile to 303-567-3021.

Sincerely,



SCOTT E. HAAS
District Ranger

Enclosures